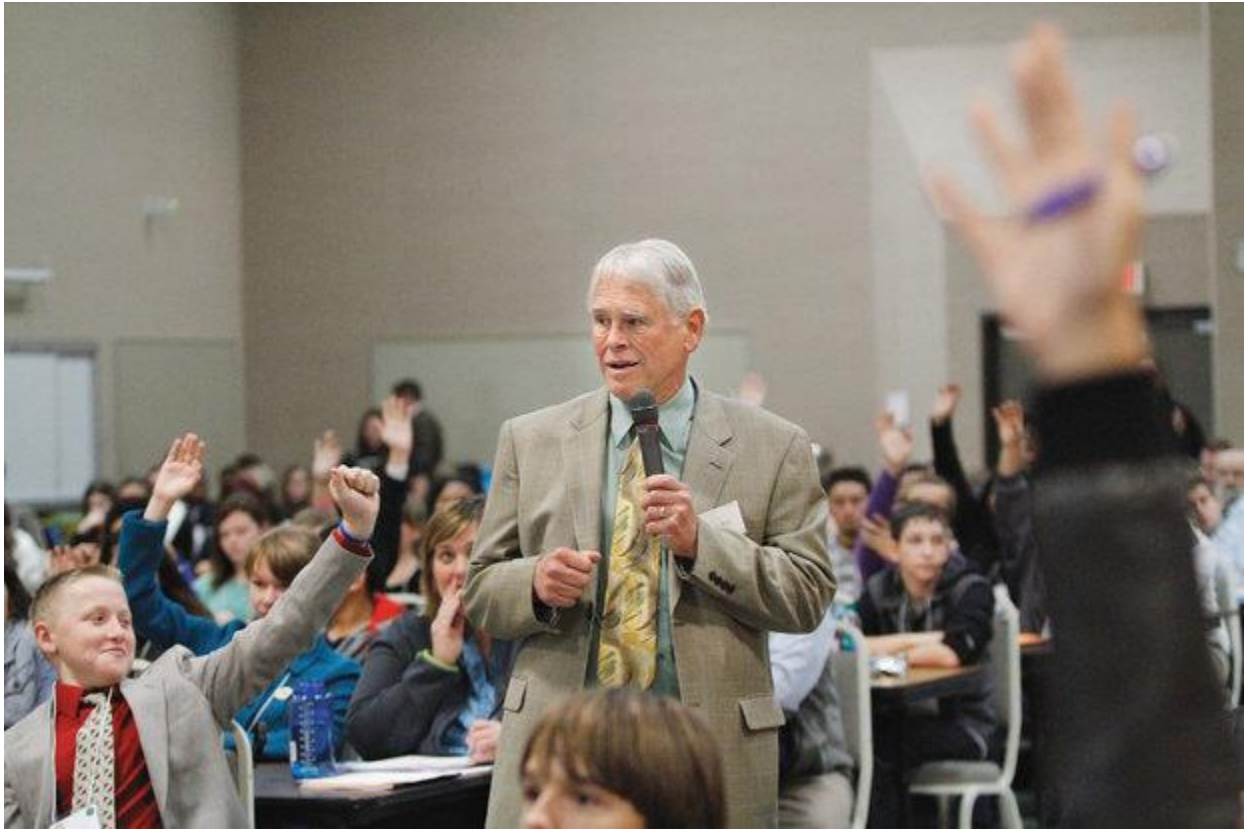


Our Voice: We're thankful for people who are helping our youth

The Bellingham Herald

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November 2, 2013 - Retired Superior Court Judge Dennis Yule walks among more than 200 students in eighth through 12th grades Friday during the 11th annual Tri-Cities Youth and Justice Forum at Columbia Basin College in Pasco. More than 60 professionals from the criminal justice field volunteered to teach participants about their careers. Yule, who helped start the program, says networking is also a big part of the program, and participants were encouraged to keep in contact with the judges, lawyers, court reporters, interpreters and members of law enforcement they met at the forum.

KAI-HUEI YAU — Tri-City Herald

Good cops

Thumbing through the Tri-City Herald on any given day you likely will see something related to law enforcement: a crime, an accident or a rescue.

We know the police are busy.

So it's especially noteworthy when they take the time to work on the prevention end of their calling.

For example, Kennewick police taught kids about safe trick-or-treating last week. They also held a workshop to educate retailers on how to cut down on shoplifting and fraud.

These events help protect the community and build trust between the public and the officers.

When you are the one getting pulled over, it's hard to keep in mind that they are here to keep the Mid-Columbia safe. But it's a good thing to remember.

Learning the law

And for those who want to learn more about what happens beyond the police station, thank you to the more than 60 volunteers from the legal system who participated in the Youth and Justice Forum -- including state Supreme Court Justices Debra L. Stephens and Charles W. Johnson who came from Olympia to spend the day with our kids.

This forum allowed 200 middle and high school students the opportunity to learn about careers in the legal system and it gave pointers to the kids about how to be safe using social media.

Johnson said that when he was 12 years old, he came to a critical junction in his life. He credits a teacher for helping him choose the path that led to law school and eventually to the Supreme Court.

We're not sure where the other path would have led.

We do know, however, it's infinitely more inspiring to learn about the justice system during a forum at Columbia Basin College than from the back seat of a police cruiser.

Beggars' Banquet

My Friends Place has been a community experiment. It provides shelter and resources to get homeless teens on track.

A few months ago, the future looked a little sketchy for the organization. Today the picture is improving.

With a good community turnout to the Beggars' Banquet, the shelter's annual fundraiser, that outlook will improve even more.

Some of these homeless kids have been kicked out of their home. For some "home" isn't a safe place to be. We all do better with structure in our lives -- even kids who don't or can't live at home for whatever reason.

We like that there are rules at the shelter. Kids have to be in school and their parents have to know where they are. They have to be trying to pull things together and meeting milestones.

We are grateful to live in a community that helps kids who are trying to help themselves.

Read more here: <http://www.bellinghamherald.com/2013/11/07/3300005/our-voice-were-thankful-for-people.html#storylink=cpy>